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Legislative Agent's Report

TO THE

69th Annual Convention

OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS FEDERATION OF LABOR

HOTEL STATLER, BOSTON, MASS.

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Legislative Agent

Legislative Agent's Report

AT THE TIME OF THIS WRITING (AUGUST 5TH) THE LEGISLATURE IS STILL IN SESSION. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THEY WILL NOT CONCLUDE THEIR BUSINESS AND PROROGUE FOR ANOTHER FEW WEEKS. STILL AWAITING FINAL ACTION ARE A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT LABOR BILLS. FOR THIS REASON THIS REPORT IS OF NECESSITY INCOMPLETE AND SUBJECT TO REVISION. A FINAL AND COMPLETE SUMMARY WILL BE SENT TO ALL AFFILIATED UNIONS AFTER LABOR DAY.

The 1955 session of the Great and General Court had for consideration approximately 3900 bills; of these 28 were filed by me on behalf of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor, 2 of which were filed jointly with the CIO and one was filed in conjunction with the Massachusetts State Association of Barbers. Over 350 other bills required the attention and participation of your Legislative Agent.

As a result of the 1954 elections, it was apparent that this year's session would be an interesting and involved one. With a Democratic majority in the House, Representative Michael F. Skerry was elected Speaker. Consequently the House membership on all standing committees was predominantly Democratic. In the Senate the Republicans were in control by a margin of 21 to 19. This resulted in the Senate membership on joint committees being predominantly Republican. As was to be expected, we were reasonably successful in securing favorable reports on most labor bills from the various committees. Further, under the leadership of Speaker Skerry and his Party's Floor Leaders Representative John F. Thomson, ably assisted by James L. O'Dea, Jr., we succeeded in having most major labor bills passed in the House. Representative Michael J. Carroll, House Chairman of the Committee on Labor and Industries, ably planned the floor strategy on bills emanating from that committee.

In the Senate the fate of labor bills enacted in the House was somewhat different. The Administration, through the Republican leadership of the Senate, responding to the pressure of business interests, partially succeeded in undoing the fine service to workers and their families performed by the House. This year, more than ever before, the Massachusetts Senate has been the "Graveyard" of liberal legislation. President Richard I. Furbush, in a recent exclusive interview, took pride in the fact that the Senate had "killed or buried" some 60-odd measures that had, after lengthy consideration, been passed by the House. To admit the role of "High Executioner" is indeed

indiscreet to say nothing of being politically unwise. Assisting on the "Guillotine" on labor legislation was Senator C. Henry Glovsky, Senate Chairman of the Committee on Labor and Industries, who at one time had given indications of following the liberal Republicanism traditional with that Senate seat, previously occupied by Senator Christopher A. Phillips and earlier by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr.

A convenient device was resorted to by the Republican leadership in the Senate to hold their wavering members in line during the past few months. Republican caucuses were held regularly and the Senators attending were obligated to follow the 'party line' on bills slated for action. Needless to say, most labor bills received this treatment. On rare occasions a few Republican Senators rebelled against this unwise and unfair action on necessary and reasonable legislation, which in many cases, had been supported by Republicans in the House. Those few Senators who courageously tried to throw off the shackles of reactionary leadership were subjected to terrific pressure, patronage inducements, and whiplashing. The disciplinary tactics of the Administration, as revealed in the Senate in the past few weeks were ruthless.

Among the recent bills that the Republican leadership of the Senate forced their members to oppose were a \$2,700.00 minimum salary for school teachers. The defeat of this urgent legislation is amazing when one considers the great teacher shortage in this state and the tremendously expanding school population. A bill establishing a basic work week of 40 hours with time and one half for overtime was killed at the enactment stage with only one Republican supporting it. An "Indian giving" unemployment compensation proposal of Governor Herter's that provided a \$5.00 increase in weekly benefits for some, but a \$1.00 to \$4.00 cut in benefits for low paid workers found all but one Republican Senator supporting it.

A number of other measures designed to benefit working people and their families received similar treatment in the Senate. It will be small consolation next fall for the Republican Senators who abjectly surrendered their integrity and independence to the party leadership to try and explain their votes to working people in their districts. To some of them who served as "pallbearers" in burying progressive legislation this year in the Senate, a similar fate awaits them next November in a "burial of ballots". Throughout this session, under the resourceful and dynamic leadership of Senator John E. Powers, the Democratic Senators courageously and steadfastly supported all labor legislation.

As stated previously most labor legislation was adopted in the House and emasculated in the Senate. One major bill affecting workers that was defeated in the House, was the A.F.L.-C.I.O. proposal for a competitive fund for sickness compensation. After a lapse of three years, during which time

the matter was "pigeon-holed" in committee, the House this year had an opportunity to vote on a disability insurance program. The bill, House Number 1623, would have established protection against off-the-job sickness or illness either under a private insurance program or under a state fund. The workers involved would decide whether they wanted to continue their private plan or come under a state plan. This honorable compromise was defeated by a vote of 126 to 103. All Republican representatives voted against it except Representative Joseph D. Saulnier of New Bedford and all Democrats voted for it except—Representatives

Boudreau, Samuel J.	Flaherty, Thomas M.	O'Connor, John H., Jr.
Buckley, John P.	Glaser, Louis H.	Oliveira, Frank B.
Connell, William A., Jr.	Harrington, Fred C.	O'Loughlin, Joseph M.
Cournoyer, Leo J.	Ivascyn, John P.	O'Rourke, John J.
Doncaster, James R.	Kaplan, Sumner Z.	Ruether, Richard A.
Donlan, Edmond J.	Kitchen, Thomas E.	Sala, Roger A.
Enright, Thomas E.	Lane, Edmund V.	Zabriskie, Albert H.

Sickness compensation met the tremendous opposition of the powerful insurance interests who constitute the most influential lobby that functions at the State House. They were aided and abetted by business interests and the public utility companies who conducted propaganda campaigns of misinformation against the bill. It was disconcerting to find some segments of the labor movement somewhat indifferent to this legislation. Undoubtedly, they were misled by some of the distorted attacks that were levelled against the proposal or, having secured through collective bargaining negotiations, health and welfare protection, did not feel impelled to strive to get these benefits for less fortunate workers.

Defensively, we were successful in defeating all anti-labor legislation during the past session. The worst attack against unions came in House Bill Number 860, a so-called "Right-to-Work" bill. This dangerous measure would have prohibited all forms of union security in Massachusetts. Potentially, it could have undermined the trade union movement and destroyed the working conditions and standards that had been built up over the years. This "right-to-wreck unions" bill aroused the trade union movement in this state as nothing else has done in recent years. They responded to this threat magnificently and did a terrific job in opposing it. It was decisively defeated in the House by a vote of 190 to 2, with only its sponsor, Representative Charles S. Marston, 3rd, Haverhill Republican, and Representative Isaac A. Hodgen, of Belchertown.

Time and the fact that four or five major labor bills are awaiting final action in the Senate does not permit a more detailed or complete report on legislative developments at the State House this session. Other comments and observations on our legislative program will be submitted when I make my report to the convention Wednesday, August 10th. In your Secretary-Treasurer's report, found in the preceding pages, I have commented on other aspects of the Massachusetts Legislature, as well as the situation in Congress.

Following is a summary of the disposition, up to August 5th, of most of the important labor legislation at the 1955 session of the Massachusetts Legislature:

BILLS FAVORED BY LABOR AND ENACTED**Regulating Advertising for Workers during Strikes**

House Bill No. 1378

(Petition of Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

A few years ago we succeeded in requiring an employer, involved in a labor dispute, to make specific reference to that fact in advertising for strike breakers. The intent of that law was evaded by some employers. The amendment adopted this year provides that the words "labor dispute exists" shall be as large as the largest type in the advertisement soliciting workers. Chapter 430.

Exempting Joint Trusteeships of Union Benefit Plans from Provisions of Insurance Laws

House Bill No. 2951

(Petition of Victor Turpin-Atlantic Fishermen's Union)

This bill permits trustees of union and employer benefit plans to pay insurance benefits directly to union members and their dependents without being subject to the state laws regulating insurance companies. This legislation paves the way for the payment of insurance benefits to fishermen, their widows and dependents under a program negotiated by the Atlantic Fishermen's Union. This far-reaching legislation was resisted by insurance companies who sought to force such funds to purchase insurance policies rather than to be administered by joint trustees and disbursed directly to beneficiaries. Chapter 636.

Increasing Workmen's Compensation Benefits to Workers in the Granite Industry

House Bill No. 1131

(Petition of Constanzo Pagnano, Granite Cutters International Union)

The previous limitations on Workmen's Compensation Benefits in cases of death from silicosis and other dust diseases has now been removed. Until this year the maximum was \$5,000. As a result of this new bill, it has been increased to \$10,000 in the case of deaths caused by the dread silicosis and similar pulmonary diseases. The efforts of the Granite Cutters Union to require their employers to install safety and dust removing equipment has contributed greatly to the reduction in the mortality rate for this industry. Chapter 234.

Pre-determined Wage Law for State Printing and Binding

House Bill No. 1730

(Petition of Boston Allied Printing Trades Council)

This bill amended the so-called pre-determined wage law that has been in effect for a number of years relative to the bidding procedure on printing

and bindery work purchased by the Commonwealth. This year's amendment up-dated the previous law to conform to the fact that the basic work week in the printing industry had been reduced as a result of collective bargaining by the printing trades unions involved. Chapter 614.

Improved Working Conditions in Freight Houses and Express Terminals
House Bill No. 1381

(Petition of Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks)

This measure puts an end to the primitive working conditions that existed in many freight houses and express stations. It requires that proper lighting, heating and ventilation be installed in such establishments and thereby protect the health and safety of the employees involved. Chapter 426.

Payroll Deductions for Credit Union Dues and Loan Payments
House Bill No. 3025

(Petition of Massachusetts Cuna Association and Representative Philip J. Durkin)

This legislation was necessary in order to correct a technicality in the law relating to deductions from a worker's pay. Until now it had generally been assumed that employers were required to honor a payroll deduction authorization for a worker's credit union dues and repayments of credit union loans. A situation arose that required this enabling legislation to legalize and facilitate such arrangements between the credit union members and their employers. Chapter 631.

Group Insurance for State Employees
House Bill No. 2980

(Based upon among others House 1589, petition of William V. Ward and others)

Under this legislation all state employees are eligible to participate in a contributory group life, accident, medical and hospitalization program. The costs of the program are to be shared equally by the state and its employees. Desirable and all as this legislation is it is small solace to the state employees who have been denied a justifiable salary increase this year. Chapter 628.

Relocation Housing for Families Displaced by Public Projects
Senate Bill No. 371

(Petition of Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

The AFL sponsored legislation of a few years ago for housing facilities for families dispossessed because of slum clearance and other public works projects was further expanded this year. In a revised form under Senate No. 756, the way has been paved to house those people who will be forced to vacate

urban redevelopment programs such as are planned for the South End and the West End of Boston. John Carroll, Chairman of the Federation's Housing Committee devoted much time to the passage of this progressive legislation. Chapter No. —.

Prohibiting Use of Auxiliary Police in Labor Disputes

House Bill No. 713

(Petition of Representative John Davoren) (D)

In the future, it will be illegal for employers to use auxiliary police or civilian defense personnel in restraining picketing activities in plants involved in labor disputes. A few cases have arisen recently where local authorities deputized civilians to assist in running scabs through picket lines. Chapter 241.

Increasing Authority of City Councils in Adjusting Public Employee Salaries

Based upon House Bill No. 666 and Senate Bill No. 675

(Petition of Associated Fire Fighters in Massachusetts and Recess Commission Report)

This legislation permits City Councils by a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote to enact salary increases for public employees in non-election years. This liberalized the previous law which limited City Councils' rights to increase salaries only for a three-month period. Chapter 358.

Inclusion of Telephone Employees under Workmen's Compensation Act

House Bill No. 848

(Petition of Massachusetts State CIO Council)

As a result of this legislation, Workmen's Compensation coverage for telephone company employees becomes compulsory. Previously, it was only optional with that company. Why they were able to avoid this compulsory requirement for so many years is difficult to understand. Chapter 336.

Grievance Procedure for City and Town Employees

House Bill No. 936

(Petition of Associated Fire Fighters of Massachusetts)

Enabling legislation whereby cities and towns may set up a review board to adjust grievances of certain public employees was accomplished through this bill. Although it excludes disputes on questions of civil service and retirement matters, it represents a great step forward. The machinery provided in this Act can be further expanded and strengthened. Chapter 294.

Requiring Sanitary Facilities in Public Garages

Based upon House Bill No. 30—Recommendations of Commissioner of Labor and Industries E. A. Johnson

This Act provides that toilet and washing facilities and fresh drinking water shall be available in public garages and other establishments of transportation companies. In this modern day, it is unbelievable the primitive conditions that existed in some of these premises. Chapter 373.

Increased State Minimum Wage

Senate Bill No. 339 revised under House No. 3027

(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

A substantial increase in the State Minimum Wage Law is practically assured. It provides for a 90c statutory hourly rate with a "floor" of 75c per hour on Wage Board Orders. In addition, it raises the previous 50c rate for employees receiving tips to a new figure of 60c per hour. The 10c and 15c hourly increase over the rates in the present law will become effective on the same date (March 1, 1956) as the changes in the Federal Minimum Wage Law just passed by Congress. Chapter —.

BILLS FAVORED BY LABOR ON WHICH FINAL ACTION IS STILL PENDING

Increasing Maximum Weekly Workmen's Compensation Benefits

House No. 1134

(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

This bill provides for a \$10.00 increase in the maximum weekly benefits for totally disabled injured workers, likewise, an increase in the minimum benefit amount. This raise to \$40.00 has been overwhelmingly approved by the House and is being held up in the Senate where the Republican members want to cut the increase to \$5.00 weekly. (Senate No. 803) Ultimately, the two bills will go to a committee on conference between the House and the Senate to reconcile differences. In any event, the maximum weekly benefits will be increased at least \$5.00.

Increasing Maximum Unemployment Benefits

House No. 867

(Petition of the Massachusetts State C.I.O.)

This measure increasing maximum weekly jobless benefits to \$35.00 has already been adopted by the House. It begins to approach the recommendations of the Republican National Administration for liberalization of unem-

ployment benefits. A determined effort is being made in the Senate to substitute Senate No. 769 which represents Governor Herter's proposal which would give a \$5.00 increase in weekly benefits to higher paid workers but would result in \$1.00 to \$4.00 weekly reduction in benefits to lower paid workers. Present indications are that this bill also will go to a Committee on Conference between the House and Senate to iron out differences in the two versions.

Increasing Individual Jobless Worker's Benefits to 40% of Average Wages

House Bill No. 2132

(Petition of Massachusetts State CIO Industrial Council)

Another improvement in the Employment Security Act relating to an individual's amount of benefits is still awaiting final action in the Senate. The House has already approved this bill increasing individual benefits to 40% of a worker's annual wages. As part of the Governor's proposal on Unemployment Compensation, the Senate Republicans are seeking to limit this increase to 35%. Other features in the Governor's bill (Senate No. 769) would penalize workers by basing benefits on average annual earnings rather than on high quarter earnings, as at present.

Regulating Interest Rates on Small Loans

House Bill No. 1259 and others

(Petition of Representative Lawrence F. Feloney and others)

After being "bottled up" in committee annually for many years, this session of the Legislature finally did something about further regulating the interest rates on small loans. Under House No. 2686, a 2% per month rate on loans up to \$600 was passed by the House after a long battle. The bill further set a rate of 1½% per month on loans up to \$1,000. Previously only loans up to \$300 were regulated and the rate was 2% per month. Since its adoption by the House, the small loans bill has been nestling in the Senate Ways and Means Committee. Undoubtedly, the "loan sharks" will strive to have the interest rates jacked up in the Senate. Protection of wage earners against exorbitant rates on small loans dictates that the Senate concur in the House proposal.

Employment Benefits to Locked Out Workers

House Bill No. 2133

(Petition of Representative James L. O'Dea, Jr.)

As House Bill No. 872, a measure has been passed by the House, clarifying the unemployment benefit rights of workers involuntarily unemployed because of a labor dispute. The bill is resting in the Senate Ways and Means Committee and a determined drive will be made in the Senate to defeat it. In many cases, the most recent of which was the truck drivers' dispute, an

employer locks out his workers in retaliation or anticipation of a strike. The ambiguity on this section of the Employment Security Act should be clarified in order that employees forced out of work, because of a strike by other workers, may receive their jobless benefits.

LABOR BILLS REFERRED TO RECESS COMMISSIONS

Revising Industrial Homework Laws

Senate Bill No. 324

(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

Our attempts to correct the many abuses that have developed in the field of Industrial Homework were the subject of much legislative attention. An existing Recess Commission studying the Industrial Homework laws has not, as yet, made its final report. At the moment, it looks as though the recommendations will not be out in time for action by the current session of the Legislature. Accordingly, the 1956 Legislature will have the opportunity and responsibility to put an end to the exploitation and sweat shop conditions that have arisen in Industrial Homework. In view of the dilatory tactics of the present Recess Commission on this subject, the Federation should submit this bill again next year.

Revoking Industrial Homework Permits in Labor Disputes

House Bill No. 1126

(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

In a few recent labor disputes, it was found that the "struck" employer was able to break or prolong the strike, by farming out work to be done in homes. House Bill No. 1126 would have corrected this condition by revoking the employers homework permit for the duration of the strike. Like the previous bill, this one has been stalled with the Recess Commission referred to above. Regardless of what the Commission does, this legislation should be filed again next year.

Reemployment Rights of Injured Workers

House Bill No. 1383

(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

This bill designed to prevent job discrimination against injured workers most certainly deserved to be enacted by the present session. It required the same employer to re-hire an injured worker after he recovered from an industrial accident. The bill, along with a number of related matters has been referred for recess study by the Committee on Labor and Industries.

Subsistence Payments Under Workmen's Compensation

House Bill No. 1122

(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

Again, the AFL sought to establish a "cost of living escalator" principle in compensating injured workers and their dependents. This is sound and desirable legislation that ultimately, in some form, should be incorporated in our Workmen's Compensation Act.

Compensation from Date of Injury

House Bill No. 1375

(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

This proposal would correct an inadequacy in our Act applicable to cases of short term injuries. It would have reduced the present 7-day waiting period so that a worker disabled for less than a week would be entitled to Workmen's Compensation benefits.

Payment for Time Lost Receiving Medical Care

House Bill No. 1380

(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

This legislation, designed to clarify a provision of the Act so that a rehabilitated worker would suffer no loss of pay while absent because of continuing medical treatment at clinics, etc., has been put over until next year.

Investigation of Insurance Companies

House No. 1085

(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

Our bill for a legislative probe of Workmen's Compensation and automobile insurance rates was referred for recess study by the Committee on Insurance. This course of action has been followed on this bill for the past few years. At the present time (August 3rd) the order authorizing recess study of this and a number of other insurance bills is still awaiting final action. Naturally, the insurance companies fear such a probe and are exerting tremendous pressure to prevent the same from taking place. It will be interesting to see whether House No. 2629, the order authorizing the study, isn't scuttled in the closing hours of the present session.

Collection of Back Vacation Pay

House Bill No. 1127

(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

Under this bill, a worker would be able to invoke the State collection of back wages law in cases where he had accumulated vacation benefits at the

time of layoff or discharge. This reasonable legislation has been referred to the Commission on Labor and Industries for study and recommendation under resolves—Chapter 82.

Study of Health and Welfare Trust Funds

Senate Bill No. 369

(Petition of Senator Francis X. McCann)

A study of the operation of health and welfare trust funds by a special Recess Commission is called for in this bill. The Federation supported Senator McCann's proposal on the condition that a representative of labor be appointed to this Commission. Our request was granted. Developments in the administration of health and welfare programs point up the need for some standards and supervision by the State insurance department. We are confident that the results of the investigation provided in Senate Bill No. 369 will reflect credit to the union operation of these plans in this State. Ultimately, some legislation in this field will be adopted. It seems more desirable that supervision be done by State rather than Federal agencies.—Resolves No. —.

BILLS OPPOSED BY LABOR AND DEFEATED

So-Called Right to Work Bill

House Bill No. 860

(Petition of Representative Charles S. Marston) (R)

One of the vicious "Right to Wreck" unions bill was introduced in the 1955 Legislature. This drastic legislation would have outlawed all forms of union security. It was similar to the union-busting legislation already in effect in 18 other states. In 1948 the voters of Massachusetts overwhelmingly rejected a previous attempt to outlaw the union shop. Largely due to the determined opposition of an aroused labor movement, House Bill No. 860 was decisively defeated by a vote of 190 to 2 in the House.

3% Sales Tax

House Bill No. 2650

(Recommendation of Governor's Fiscal Survey Commission)

A proposal to enact a 3% sales tax in Massachusetts was made by a Fiscal Survey Commission appointed by Governor Herter to study the State's revenue needs and tax structure. Sales taxes are unjust and regressive. They impose a disproportionately heavy burden upon people who work for a living. Certain selfish interests spearheaded by the Taxpayers Associations are determined to foist this unfair tax upon the backs of wage earners of Massachusetts. Although the proponents of a sales tax failed this year the threat of this "pocket picking" tax will become greater as the State's fiscal problems increase or until our proposal for a graduated state income tax is adopted.

Revision of Public Employees' Pensions**House Bill No. 2500***(Based on recommendations of Special Recess Commission)*

The pension rights of certain public employees would have been jeopardized if this far-reaching bill had been enacted. While purporting to liberalize the retirement benefits of long-service public employees it, in reality, would have resulted in reduction of present benefits to many. Grant that certain abuses can develop in public employee pension programs, the sound and reasonable solution was not found in House Bill No. 2500. It constitutes a "meat-axe" approach to a problem that requires a paring knife.

Weakening Pre-determined Wage Law on Public Construction**House Bill No. 859***(Petition of Massachusetts Selectmen's Association)*

A drive to undermine the provisions of Chapter 461 of the "pre-determined wage law" as most recently amended by Chapter 654 of the Acts of 1954 was made by the selectmen from some small towns. Their amendment was designed to allow the awarding authorities to give preference to locally favored contractors. House No. 859 could have resulted in collusion and chaos in the construction of schools and other public buildings and increased burdens on taxpayers. It would have broken down the stability and standards that the Building Trades unions have established over the years.

Restricting Peaceful Picketing**House Bill No. 1382***(Petition of Howard M. Strong, Jr.)*

Educational picketing by workers, other than those directly employed by the establishment involved, in a labor dispute would have been prohibited by this bill. It would have greatly weakened the 1950 anti-injunction law and would have deprived unions of their lawful rights to inform the public of the unfair practices of certain employers.

Discontinuance of Workmen's Compensation Without a Hearing**House Bill No. 1368***(Petition of John J. Roddy, Boston Chamber of Commerce)*

Employers sought the right to arbitrarily discontinue benefit payments to injured workers under this bill. It would have given top priority to company requests to terminate benefits in the Industrial Accident Board procedure. The heartlessness of this measure can be more fully appreciated when one realizes that workers often have to wait from 6 months to a year to establish their benefit rights today. After this long stalling by insurance companies, House Bill No. 1368 would have allowed them to immediately start to knock the worker off compensation.

Requiring Jobless Workers to Prove that They Are Seeking Work**House Bill No. 1617***(Petition of Massachusetts State Chamber of Commerce, Inc.)*

The "bird dog" philosophy for the unemployed was the motivation for this sadistic bill. It would have required a worker drawing unemployment benefits to periodically prove that he was actively looking for work. It would have revived the notorious Form 31 that had to be abandoned by the Division of Employment Security some years ago. Under this bill an unemployed textile worker would be deprived of compensation unless he could show that he had visited a number of concerns and applied for work. To any one who is familiar with the textile industry, it is axiomatic that a slump affects the industry as a whole not just one particular company.

BILLS FAVORED BY LABOR AND DEFEATED**Labor and Consumer Representation on Public Utilities Commission****Senate Bill No. 509***(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)*

Again this year the Federation sought legislation requiring that 1 of the 5 members of the Public Utilities Commission have a background in labor relations and consumer problems. In a modified form a bill, Senate No. 627, requiring the Governor "to give consideration" to a person with these qualifications was passed by both the House and the Senate. Strange as it may seem, this watered-down bill was vetoed by the Governor for incredible reasons. By a narrow margin his veto was sustained in the Senate. (See Senate No. 665.) The merits of this legislation and the need for consumer protection on the D.P.U. requires that this bill be reintroduced next year in its original form.

Graduated State Income Tax**House Bill No. 1297***(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)*

Our proposal for a constitutional amendment to permit the levying of state income taxes on a graduated basis was approved by a 5-vote margin at a joint convention of the House and Senate. Since May 16th the Legislature has failed to hold another joint convention to give this bill final approval. Present indications are that they won't. The longer the legislature defers facing up to the future fiscal problems of the Commonwealth, the more necessary will be the need for additional tax revenue. Those opposed to a graduated state income tax are hoping that the situation worsens so that a sales tax will be inevitable. The only sound and fair solution to the state tax problem is a graduated income tax. In an amended form the Federation should

re-submit this proposal to the 1956 Legislature and put on a concerted campaign for its enactment so that the question may be submitted to the voters as a constitutional amendment in the 1958 Elections.

\$3000 Teachers' Minimum Salary

Senate Bill No. 230

(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

Once again the A. F. L. tried to establish a \$3000 starting salary for public school teachers. In a modified form (House No. 278) the House approved a \$2700-\$3000 salary bill. In the Senate this proposal was defeated with the entire Republican membership voting against it. In the face of the expanding school population and the serious shortage of teachers, it is difficult to understand the Republican's position on this bill. Next year this Federation should file a bill for a \$3000-\$3500 minimum starting salary.

Time and One-Half Over Forty Hours

House Bill No. 2908

(Petition of Massachusetts State CIO Council)

Establishment of a basic work week of forty hours with time and one-half for overtime was called for in this measure. It would extend to workers subject to the State Minimum Wage Law, the same maximum work week provisions that apply to workers in interstate commerce covered by the Federal Wage and Hour Law. With a few exemptions, it was originally passed by both the House and the Senate. On August 4th, the Senate by a 20-20 tie vote refused to enact the bill. The merits of this legislation and the support that it attracted indicate that prospects for its passage next year are good.

Clarifying Vacation Pay for Workers Drawing Unemployment Compensation

House Bill No. 1615

(Petition of Representative John F. X. Davoren)

A number of situations have arisen in the past year whereby persons drawing unemployment compensation have been penalized because they received accumulated vacation payments. In the garment industry and some others a fixed percentage of pay roll is regularly remitted to a union-administered fund and is distributed at vacation time. Under this type of an arrangement, the worker is entitled to these deferred payments accumulated by him during the previous year. The present hostile administration of the Employment Security Act has ruled that these deferred vacation payments render workers, receiving them, ineligible for unemployment benefits. A case has just arisen in Fall River that will test this unfair ruling. Representative Davoren's bill was adopted in the House, but killed in the Senate at the behest of Senator Glovsky. The Federation should correct this inequity by introducing a bill next year.

Reorganization of State Housing Board

House Bill No. 1222

(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

Under this bill the State Housing Board would be reconstituted with five co-equal members, one of whom would be a representative of labor. After receiving a favorable committee report, House Bill No. 1222 was adopted by the House but defeated in the Senate where the entire Republican membership opposed it. The present concentration of authority in the hands of the chairman renders the other four members ineffectual. This in part explains why the role of the State Housing Board in this important field has deteriorated. Our efforts to reorganize and revitalize this agency should be renewed next year.

Bidding on School Bus Contracts

House Bill No. 1566

(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

This measure designed to place the organized bus companies on a more equal competitive basis with others in contracting to transport school children was favorably reported by committee under another bill, House No. 1046. This would have required that school bus contracts go to the lowest responsible bidders. Despite a strenuous fight in the House, it was defeated. The Federation should continue its fight to secure the adoption of legislation requiring that said contracts be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder.

Increasing School Attendance Age

House Bill No. 1049

(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

Again our campaign to increase the school-leaving age to 16 years failed. The ease with which too many 14 and 15 year olds drop out of school today is a serious social and economic problem. In a revised form the A. F. of L. should resubmit this legislation in order that the compulsory school attendance age in Massachusetts be raised to 16 years as in many other states.

Time Off for Voting

House Bill No. 1195

(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

This measure provided that workers receive two hours off without loss of pay in order to vote on state election days. It represented a modification of our previous attempts to have election day made a legal holiday. In view of a recent court decision in Illinois on their statute requiring employers to grant workers time off with pay to vote, it would appear as though we should reconsider our position on this matter. Perhaps an easier solution would be to have this subject matter handled by unions in collective bargaining negotiations.

Pre-determined Wages for Building Wrecking

House Bill No. 1484

(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

The extension of the Commonwealth's prevailing wage policy to cover the demolition of public buildings and projects received a favorable committee report. It was, however, later rejected by the House as a result of a recommendation of its Ways and Means Committee. To be consistent the standards and protection of the pre-determined wage policy should be extended to the demolition of public projects just as it has been applied to the construction thereof. This matter should be the subject of further legislation.

Limiting D.P.U. Licenses of Bus Drivers

House Bill No. 1254

(Petition of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

As a result of a resolution adopted at the 68th convention, the Federation introduced this bill which provided that the D.P.U. licenses of bus drivers would be revoked after their termination of employment with the company involved. In a revised form it was initially approved. Subsequently, however, it was defeated in the House. The delegates from the bus drivers locals should decide whether it is feasible to re-submit the bill next year.

Competitive Fund for Sickness Compensation

House Bill No. 1623

(Petition of Massachusetts A.F.L. and Massachusetts State C.I.O.)

A compromise bill establishing disability insurance for workers unemployed because of sickness came to a vote for the first time in three years. Patterned after the law in effect in California it permitted workers to decide whether they wanted to be covered by a private insurance company plan or under a state program. An intensive campaign of pressure and propaganda was waged against this honorable compromise sickness compensation bill by insurance companies, public utilities and others. With the assistance of 21 Democrats along with practically all of the Republicans, the bill was defeated in the House. It should be reintroduced in order to protect thousands of workers in this state against the economic hazards of off-the-job illness or injury.

Working Employers Belonging to Unions

House Bill No. 1120

(Petition of Massachusetts Federation of Labor)

This bill would have amended the State Labor Relations Act to facilitate the organization of working employers in small establishments like barber shops. This remedial legislation was the result of a court decision that interpreted the Act so as to prohibit an employer from paying union dues. Serious consideration should be given to a somewhat different legislative approach to the problem next year.

\$360 Salary Increase for State Employees**Based Upon Senate Bill No. 464 and Others***(Petition of William V. Ward, A.F.S.C. & M.E. and others)*

A long deferred general salary increase of \$360.00 for the 33,000 state employees was approved as House No. 2771 by both the House and the Senate. Governor Herter vetoed the measure on the grounds that the legislature had not supplied the necessary funds and on the further grounds that he was opposed to "across-the-board" increases. As has been the case with other vetoes this year it was impossible to secure the two-third vote necessary to over-ride. As a result of this shabby treatment, the problem of securing and retaining the services of capable and loyal employees to work for the state and its various institutions will be more difficult in the future.

Minimum Standards for Barbers**Senate Bill No. 449***(Petition of Massachusetts State Association of Barbers,
and Massachusetts Federation of Labor)*

For many years the Barbers Union has tried to establish minimum standards and maximum hours for the operation of barber shops in this state. The present chaotic working conditions and cut-throat competition could be corrected and stabilized by the passage of legislation similar to that existing in some other states.

State Fund for Workmen's Compensation**House Bill Number 1487***(Petition of Massachusetts A.F.L. and Massachusetts C.I.O.)*

As in the past labor's proposal for state administration of Workmen's Compensation Insurance was defeated. For many years we have fought to have this form of insurance operated for the benefit of injured workers rather than for the profit of insurance companies. In spite of its perennial defeats the need for this legislation should be apparent when one considers that over \$60,000,000 in premiums will be collected from Massachusetts employers in 1955. Of this tremendous amount less than ½ will never be paid out in benefits to injured workers and their dependents.

CONCLUSION

Limitations of time and space have prevented a more detailed resumé of many other legislative matters that require the attention of your Legislative Agent during the past session. Constant alertness and attendance at the State House was necessary in order to protect the interests of the Federation's members. This year the attendance at most hearings on labor measures was an improvement over the past. This was due largely to the effectiveness of the Legislative Advisory Committee. For the past 6 months this new 45-man committee has greatly strengthened the Federation's legislative activities; not merely have they been instrumental in ensuring a respectable turnout at hearings but through their attendance at the monthly luncheons to legislators have contributed a fresh look and fresh point of view to those present. In this connection I wish to express my grateful appreciation to all of the members of the Legislative Advisory Committee for their splendid cooperation, particularly to the chairmen of the various standing committees, George Lewis, Daniel F. Downey, Charles Kelley, Helen Kirby, John Carroll.

My appreciation is also extended to President Henry Brides, the members of the Executive Council, Director of Education Francis E. Lavigne, Robert M. Segal, the Federation's legal advisor, Samuel V. Horovitz, advisor on workmen's compensation, John Kabachus, Legislative Agent of the Firefighters, the legislative representatives of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Albert G. Clifton, Legislative Agent of the CIO, Commissioner of Labor and Industries Ernest A. Johnson, the officers and members of local unions and Central Labor Unions, and all others who, by their encouraging support, assisted in the preparation and presentation of the Federation's 1955 legislative program. In passing I want to commend Alfred LaFrennie of the Massachusetts State Council of Carpenters and the Fitchburg Building Trades Council for his faithful attendance at practically every hearing.

I wish to commend and thank all at the State House who assisted with the Federation's program. They include Speaker of the House Michael Skerry, Majority Floor Leaders Representatives John F. Thomson and James L. O'Dea, Jr., Minority Floor Leader Charles Gibbons and House Chairman Michael J. Carroll and other members of the Committee on Labor and Industries as well as the chairmen and members of other committees that considered bills affecting workers. In the Senate, President Richard I. Furbush, Minority Floor Leader Senator John E. Powers, with the assistance of Senator Maurice Donahue and Senators Umana, Previte and Fleming and on occasions Senator C. Henry Glovsky, the legislative secretaries of His Excellency the Governor John J. White and Richard White.

In retrospect the past year has been a most difficult and challenging one. While the final results won't be known for another few weeks, I feel confident that the working people of Massachusetts will have made some substantial progress at this 1955 session of the Great and General Court. Grant that in many respects we wish the legislature had acted more courageously on a number of vital bills. Those legislative victories that we achieved this year can and must be improved and strengthened next year if Massachusetts

workers are to hold their own with workers in comparable industrial states. Since 1956 will be an election year the prospects for further progress in this direction are reasonably bright.

To the delegates to the 1953 Convention, who conferred upon me the distinct honor and privilege of serving as Legislative Agent, may I express my grateful appreciation and thanks. I sincerely trust that in my performance of my duties of that position I have measured up to their expectations and to the highest traditions of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth J. Kelley

Legislative Agent.

